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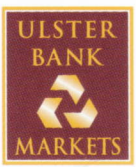
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GUISEPPE VERDI

LA TRAVIATA

Sung in Italian

GUISEPPE VERDI
Opera in three acts

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave after the play
La Dame aux camélias by Alexandre Dumas fils

Conductor	Jérôme Pillement
Director	Stephan Grögler
Designer	Véronique Seymat
Lighting Designer	Nick McCall
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Chorus Master Christopher McManus

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Cast

GUISEPPE VERDI

LA TRAVIATA

Violetta Valéry	Regina Nathan
Flora Bervoix	Regina Hanley
Annina, Violetta's maid	Michele Sheridan
Alfredo Germont	Jean-Pierre Furlan
Giorgio Germont, his father	Guidi Paevatalu
Gastone, Vicomte de Letorières	Neville Ackerman
Baron Duphol, Violetta's protector	Martin Higgins
Marquis d'Obigny	Malcolm Rivers
Doctor Grenvil	Gerard O'Connor
Giuseppe, Violetta's servant	James Nelson
Flora's servant	Lorcan O'Byrne
Messenger	Des Capliss

Répétiteur	Mairéad Hurley
Stage Manager	Paula Tierney
ASM	Miriam Harper
Scenery constructed by:	Theatre Production Services
Costumes made by:	Denise Heywood Monica Ennis
Men's tailoring:	Denis Darcy
Grateful thanks to:	Richard Greene at Angels & Bermans Royal National Theatre

La traviata was first performed at La Fenice, Venice, 6 March 1853
The first Dublin performance was at the Theatre Royal, 14 October, 1856
The first DGOS performance, sung in English, was at the Gaiety Theatre, 19 May, 1941

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GUISEPPE VERDI

LA TRAVIATA

THE PLOT AT A GLANCE

At a lavish party in her Paris house, the courtesan Violetta Valéry meets a young admirer, Alfredo Germont, who confesses that he has been madly in love with her for more than a year. Left alone after her guests have gone, Violetta muses on the idea of falling in love, then dismisses it and proclaims that she will live what is left of her life in a frenzy of pleasure and freedom.

Nevertheless, she decides to abandon her frenetic social life and set up home in the country with her new lover. Here, she is visited by Alfredo's father Giorgio Germont. He asks Violetta to give up her liaison with his son in order that his daughter's imminent marriage will not be tainted by scandal. Violetta, who knows that she is suffering from consumption and that separation from Alfredo may well hasten her death, agrees to comply with the elder Germont 's request.

Unaware of the true nature of Violetta's sacrifice, the distraught Alfredo assumes that she has simply deserted him and returned to a life of luxury with her former protector, the wealthy Baron Duphol. He follows Violetta to a party at the home of Flora Bervoix where he denounces her in front of the horrified guests and then accepts a challenge to a duel with the Baron.

Many months later, after he has learned the true facts from his father, Alfredo returns to ask Violetta's forgiveness. But it is too late: the consumption has taken its toll and he arrives just in time for a brief moment of happiness before the stricken woman dies in his arms.



FIASCO IN VENICE

It is a well-known fact that the first performance of *La traviata* in Venice in March 1853 was a total fiasco. But it is difficult at this remove to know exactly why. The received view that the main roles were miscast is only partly true. The generous proportions of the leading lady, Fanny Salvini-Donatelli, may well have diminished the credibility of her portrayal of the consumptive heroine; but her actual singing was greatly admired and her big scene at the end of Act 1 was greeted with an ovation for singer and composer. It is true that the tenor Ludovico Graziani was below par and that the baritone Felice Varesi was unhappy with his role, but the most likely reason for the failure was the nature of the plot, which was probably too risqué for the conservative Venetians of those times. It used to be said that the contemporary setting and costumes were another negative factor; but the truth is that the original production back-dated the action a couple of centuries and it was some decades before the opera was eventually given in its intended 1840s setting.

Whatever the causes behind the opera's initial problems, time has totally vindicated the composer and *La traviata* remains one of the most frequently performed works, not only in the Verdi canon but in the entire operatic repertoire. *La traviata* – the title translates roughly as 'the woman gone astray' – tells the bitter-sweet story of the doomed affair between the consumptive courtesan and her tenor lover. It is a story of self-sacrifice, of lovers' misunderstandings, and of reconciliation that comes too late. And Verdi has enhanced the play's already highly emotional impact with a veritable treasure-house of his most wonderful melodies.

In *La traviata*, Verdi not only capitalises on the proven formulae of his two previous operas, *Rigoletto* and *Il trovatore*, but shows a new-found skill in character delineation that looks forward to the great masterpieces that would follow in his final period. But he never falls into the trap of letting vocal characterisation compromise his melodic muse, his ability to enhance the dramatic situations with long-lined melodies. And the tunes he conjured up for this opera are amongst the most memorable in his whole output. The drinking duet; the soprano's long scene at the end of Act 1, her encounter with her lover's father, and her harrowing deathbed scene; the many superb solos, duets and ensembles; the two famous preludes; all contribute to a work that looms high in the annals of operatic masterpieces.



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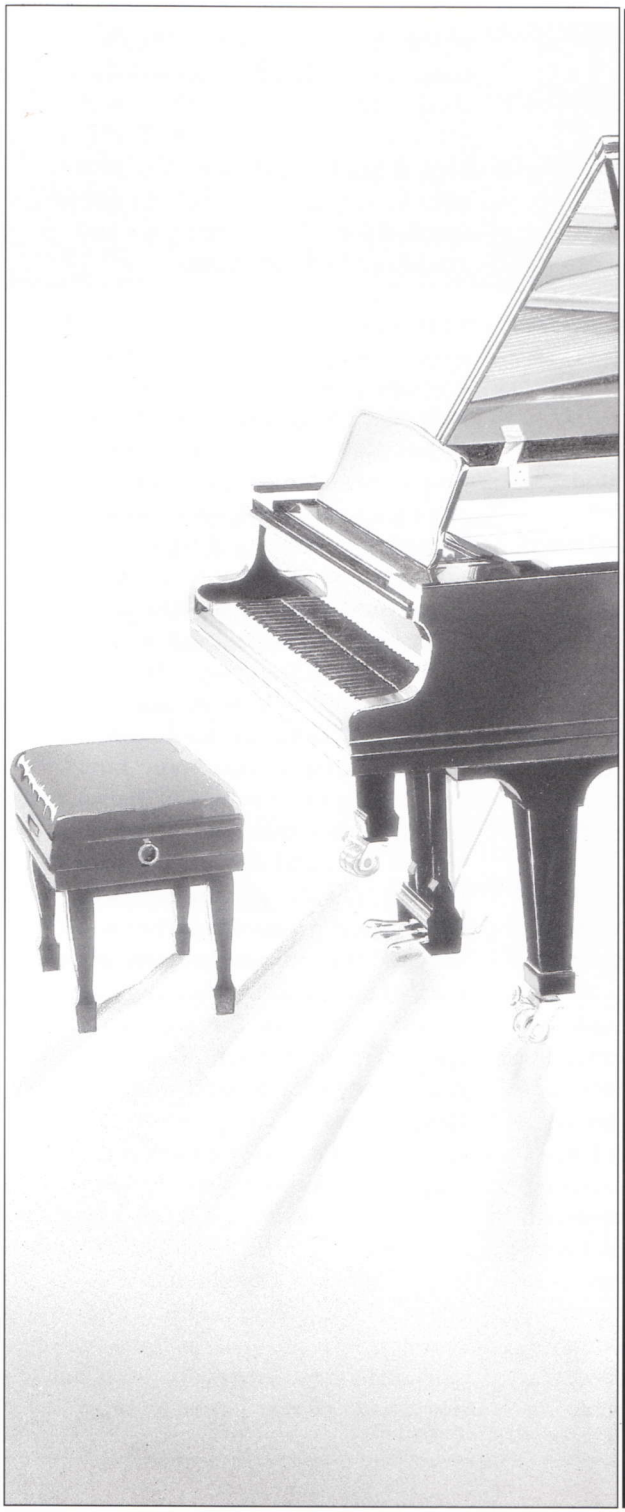
ALEXANDRE DUMAS THE YOUNGER AND LA DAME AUX CAMELIAS

APRIL FITZLYON

On February 2, 1852, Alexandre Dumas the Younger's play *La dame aux camélias* was produced at the Vaudeville Theatre in Paris. It was an immediate success, made Dumas's name – he was twenty-seven – and became one of the most popular French plays of the 19th century. It was a landmark in the French theatre for several reasons: it was one of the first dramas to take contemporary life as its theme; it was one of the first plays to show a modern – as opposed to historical – courtesan in a sympathetic light; finally, it was well-known that much of the play was true. Dumas *fils* had already published a novel of the same name in 1848, and had not concealed the fact that it was autobiographical, based on his own love-affair with the courtesan Marie Duplessis, who had died of consumption in 1847. Many people in the first-night audience had known her, a few even figured as minor characters in the play; certainly everyone knew all about her, for her life and death had been subjects dear to journalists, men about town, and everyone interested in gossip – in other words, all Paris. People still remembered Marie Duplessis's frequent appearances in a box at the theatre, when she was the cynosure of all eyes; they remembered her smart blue coupé, drawn by magnificent English thoroughbreds, in which she used to drive to the Bois de Boulogne. They remembered, too, the auction held in her apartment after her death to pay off her numerous creditors, when crowds of people, Dickens amongst them, had gone to gape at the elegance and luxury in which a courtesan had lived, and to speculate about the scenes which had taken place against that sumptuous décor.

Marie Duplessis – her real name was Alphonsine Plessis – was a peasant girl from Normandy. She had not come from a good home: her grandmother had been half beggar, half prostitute; her father was ill-natured, vicious, hard and debauched; his wife had left him, abandoning her two daughters. Alphonsine's father is said to have sold her to some gypsies; at any rate, when she was about fourteen she turned up in Paris, starving, dirty and in rags. Within a relatively short time she became the best-dressed woman in Paris, a trend-setter, a celebrity.

Alphonsine's progress from rags to riches was, for the epoch, classical. At first she eked out a living as a *grisette*. A *grisette* was a Parisian girl who worked in 'clean' trades: dressmaking, sewing, embroidery, braiding, flowers. Since *grisettes* were very badly paid, they were often, but not always, of easy virtue. Mimi, in



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Marie Duplessis.

Murger's *Scènes de la vie de bohème* (1849) and Puccini's opera, was a *grisette*. Alphonsine's first love-affairs may have been, like Mimi's, with poor students, but they were probably more sordid.

Eventually she found a restaurant-keeper who set her up in a modest way in a little flat. But her extraordinary beauty soon caught the eye of a rich young nobleman – the Comte de Guiche, later Duc de Gramont, then aged twenty – and from then on she was launched on her career. She was kept in luxury by a number of rich lovers, mostly members of the newly-founded Jockey Club, the lions and dandies of Parisian society.

Alphonsine's most substantial bills – and they were very substantial indeed – were paid by Count Gustav Stackelberg, a retired Russian diplomat, who was then eighty years old. Three of Stackelberg's daughters had recently died young of consumption; it is said that he was so struck by Alphonsine's likeness to one of them, and by the fact that she suffered from the same disease, that he offered to keep her in luxury, with no strings attached. Strange though this story may seem, usually reliable sources vouch for its truth; but Dumas *fils* maintained that the Count's motives were less disinterested. Stackelberg occasionally accompanied Marie Duplessis, as Alphonsine Plessis now called herself, to the theatre; he does not seem to have objected too much to her many lovers.

During the first half of the 19th century courtesans usually came from *le demi-monde*, to which neither Marie Duplessis, nor the later courtesans of the Second Empire, ever belonged. Since Dumas *fils* himself invented the expression after Marie's death in his play *Le Demi-Monde* (1855), and since he rightly foresaw that it would be misinterpreted, here is his own definition: 'Let us establish, for dictionaries of the future, that the *demi-monde* does not, as people believe and say in print, represent the mob of courtesans, but the group of

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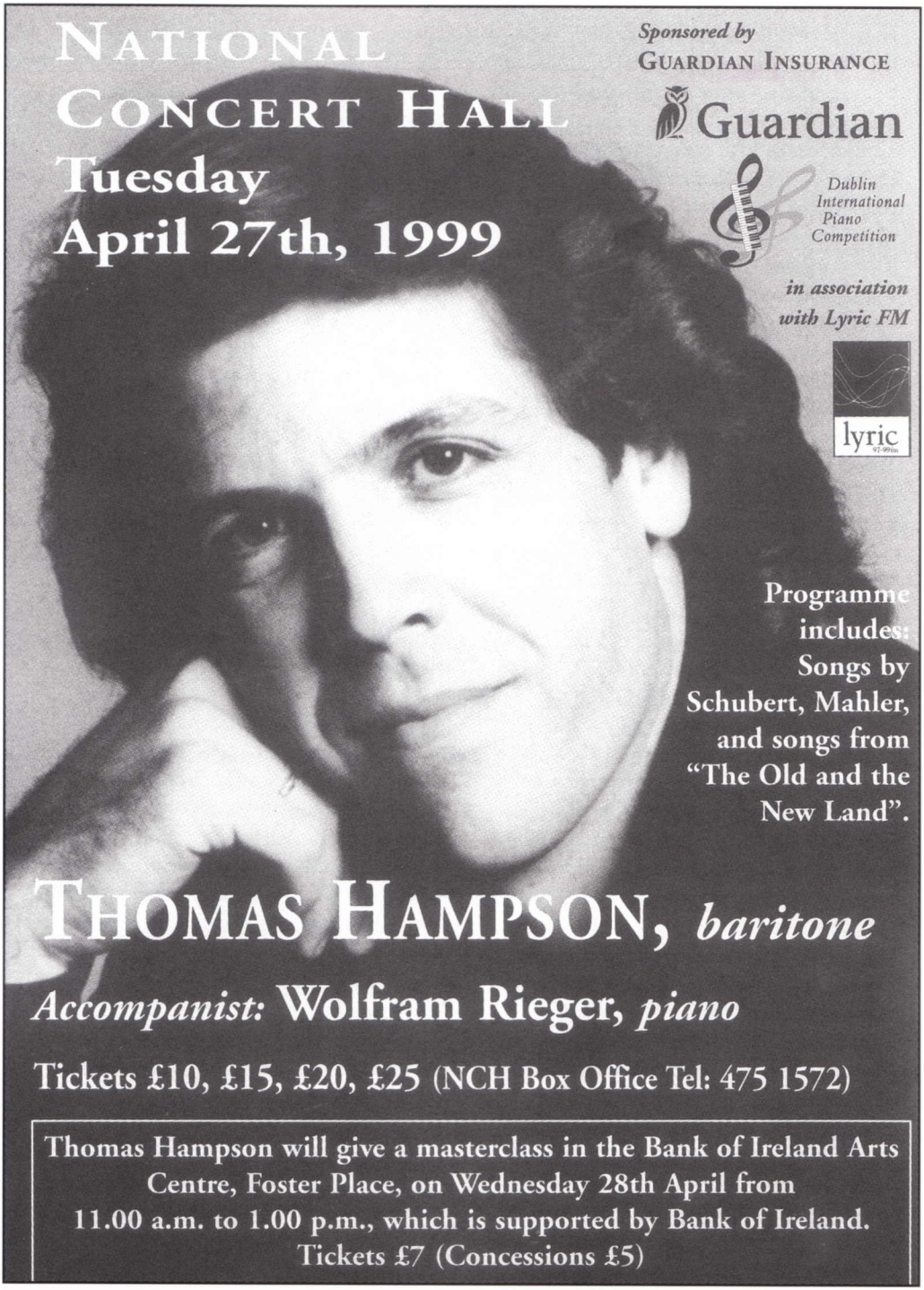
society people who have come down in the world. Not everyone who wants to belong to the *demi-monde* can do so'. Society women who, for some reason – an indiscreet love affair, an illegitimate child – were no longer accepted by their peers, formed the *demi-monde*; their manners were acceptable, but their morals were not. These women were often very short of money and, either from poverty or inclination, sometimes became courtesans. Since they were educated women, from the same social set as the men who frequented them, they could provide much more than sex; they could entertain and amuse, arrange elegant parties, and provide intelligent companionship. The *demi-monde* was a refined, though permissive, society.

Despite her humble origins, Marie Duplessis belonged to this tradition of refined and intelligent courtesans; she certainly did not resemble the courtesans of the Second Empire, coarse harpies such as Cora Pearl. Unlike them, she appears to have been sensitive, modest and intuitive, to have had what Liszt described as 'an enchanting nature', to have had a heart. Unlike them, she was never responsible for scandals, debts, suicides. She had a natural refinement and distinction; and she had good taste, both in appearance and behaviour. When she arrived in Paris she could only just sign her name; but she soon learned to write correctly, to ride, to dance, and play the piano, to behave like a great lady. Her library was quite extensive: it consisted mainly of the Romantics – Dumas *père,* Lamartine, Musset, Walter Scott – but also included Molière, Cervantes and, significantly, Prèvost's *Manon Lescaut* (1731), which plays a prominent part in the novel of Dumas *fils*.

Above all, Marie Duplessis learned to talk well, and this was perhaps her principal charm – men enjoyed her company. Jules Janin witnessed her first meeting with Liszt, in a theatre; Liszt was enthralled by her conversation, and they talked throughout a whole act of the play. 'No coarse expression ever passed her lips,' said an Englishman who knew her. 'Lola Montès could not make friends, Alphonsine Plessis could not make enemies.' But telling the truth was not her strong point; she used to say: 'Lying keeps the teeth white.'

Despite her way of life, Marie Duplessis retained a capacity for feeling and an innocence rare in her profession, which gave her an added piquancy. 'She had been a *grisette*', said Dumas, 'that is why she still had a heart'. Liszt went further: 'The habit of what one calls (and perhaps is) corrupting never touched her heart'. She was the personification of the Romantic heroine: thin, pale, with large dark eyes; she was melancholy, and suffered from *ennui*, Musset's *mal du siècle*. Above all she bore what was, ever since *Werther*, the greatest Romantic distinction: she was marked in the prime of youth by the certainty of an early death.

'I shan't live,' she told Liszt. 'I'm an odd sort of girl, and I won't be able to hold on to this life, which I don't know how to lead, and which I don't know how to bear, either. Take me, take me away wherever you like; I won't be in your way, I sleep all day, in the evening you'll let me go to the theatre, and at night you'll do what you like


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with me.' Liszt did contemplate taking her to Constantinople, but nothing came of it. He was profoundly moved by her death, and said that, had he been in Paris when she died, he would have had his 'quarter of an hour as Des Grieux'.

Dumas *fils* met Marie Duplessis in 1844. They were both twenty years old; but whereas Marie had already reached the summit of her career, Alexandre had not yet published anything, and was merely the son of a famous father. The story of their meeting is exactly retold in Dumas's novel: Dumas figures as Armand Duval (Alfredo Germont in the opera), and Marie as Marguerite Gautier (Violetta Valéry in the opera). The course of their love-affair is described in the novel with many details and subsidiary characters taken from real life; the play is necessarily more schematic, the opera even more so.
'However', wrote Dumas, 'Marie Duplessis did not have all the pathetic adventures which I ascribe to Marguerite Gautier, but she wanted nothing better than to have them. If she did not sacrifice anything to Armand, it is because Armand did not wish her to. To her great regret, she was only able to play the first and second acts of the drama'.

There are two important incidents in the drama which did not occur in real life. Firstly, Dumas *père* did not intervene in the love affair, and his character in no way resembled that of Duval *père* who, in the fictions, speaks for conventional morality. That was not at all the line of the author of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, who was an exuberant sensualist and bon vivant. The second important difference is that Dumas *fils* did not return in time to have a death bed reconciliation with his mistress, as Duval does in the stage version. The end of the story in real life was rather different.

About a year before her death, Marie Duplessis went to London with one of her protectors of long standing, the Vicomte Edouard de Perregaux. They were married in Kensington Register Office in February, 1846, and then returned to France. Both seem to have regretted this marriage, which was anyway probably not legally valid in France. They never lived together as husband and wife, and Marie did not use her husband's name, although she did sometimes use his title and his coat of arms. She died of consumption a fortnight after her twenty-third birthday. Of the many men who had been her friends or lovers, only her husband and, perhaps, old Count Stackelberg attended her funeral. Dumas was abroad at the time; when he heard of the news he hurried back to Paris and, overwhelmed with remorse and nostalgia, wrote his novel in a few days. He probably was present, with Perregaux, when her body was later exhumed in order to be reburied elsewhere; this grizzly scene is described in detail in his novel. Marie Duplessis became something of a cult figure; for many years after her death people used to deposit camellias on her grave.

The title of the novel and the play was Dumas's own invention. Marie Duplessis was never referred to as '*la dame aux camélias*' during her lifetime. But she did have a predilection for those flowers, and almost always

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wore or carried them, partly because they were very expensive, and she loved everything expensive, but mainly because they have no scent - scent made her feel faint. Dumas may have derived his title from the nickname of a certain Lautour-Mézeray, who was known as '*l'homme au camélia*'; he was a dandy, who never went out without a camellia in his button-hole, and is reputed to have spent over 50,000 francs on this whim.

Later, Dumas *fils* turned his novel into a play, At first it was banned by the censor; but it was finally produced after the accession of Napoleon III, thanks to his half-brother, the Duc de Morny. Although *La dame aux camélias* was a box-office success from the first, it did arouse a good deal of controversy. Many people felt that it was a glorification of vice, the product of a permissive society; others, more perceptive, discerned in it in embryo the moralising element which was soon to become an integral part of all the work of Dumas *fils*; but the majority accepted it simply as a moving human story.

In *La dame aux camélias*, which is not typical of his work as a whole, Dumas *fils* for once outstripped his famous father, and created a play which has stood the test of time. It has done so partly because in it Dumas *fils* expressed a deeply-felt personal experience; but it lives mainly because in the part of Marguerite Gautier he created a magnificent opportunity for a great dramatic actress. Among the many great actresses from various countries who seized that opportunity were: Madame Doche (the first Marguerite), Sarah Bernhardt, Eleonora Duse, Ludmilla Pitoëff, and Edwige Feuillière (Paris, 1937, London 1955). Amongst many famous productions, there was one by Meyerhold (1935). It was a very popular part of the silent cinema – there were eleven versions between 1907 and 1927, including one by Sarah Bernhardt (1911). On the screen the part was played by Yvonne Printemps (1934) and Garbo (*Camille*, 1937) among many others. Mauro Bolognini's version (1981) with Isabelle Huppert as Marguerite, is the twenty-third film to be based on Dumas's play.

At the end of the first performance of his play Dumas's friends asked him if he was going on to a party to celebrate his success. He replied that he was not, as he was spending the evening with a lady; he then went to have a quiet supper with his mother. This anecdote contains the key to Dumas's life and work, and particularly to his relationship with Marie Duplessis; for he was illegitimate, and the difficulties both he and his mother had as a result had marked him profoundly.

Dumas's mother, Catherine Labay, who had also been a *grisette*, had lived with Dumas *père* when he first came to Paris, twenty-one years old, and quite unknown. When he became famous, he abandoned her, but he recognised his son, with whom he was very friendly, despite the difference in their characters. Catherine Labay was a virtuous and hard-working woman, whose son adored her. He had seen what she had suffered on his behalf, and he himself had suffered taunts at school about his illegitimacy. His mother's difficult life had made him able to see the woman's point of view

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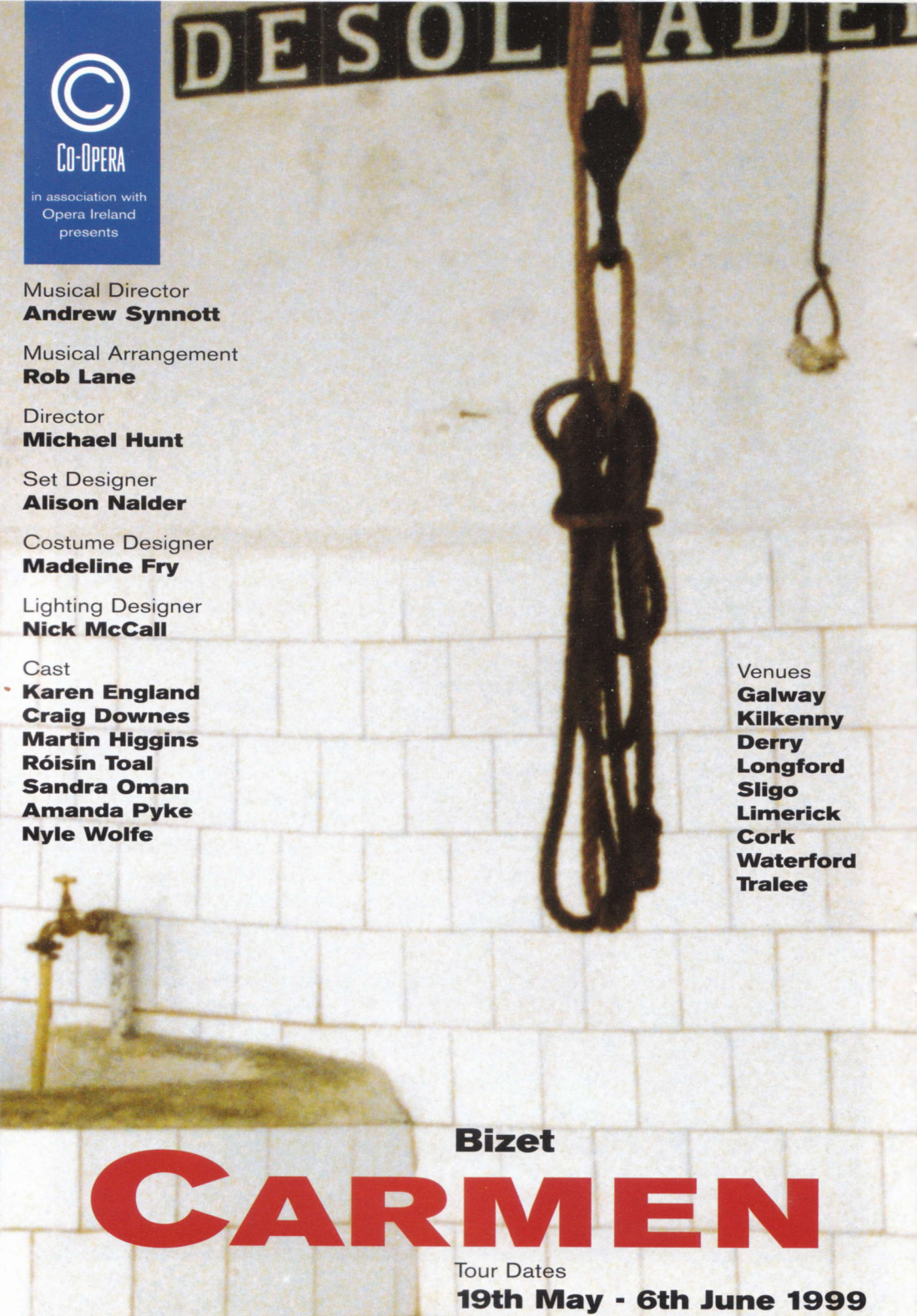
better than most men of his time, and had made his relationship with Marie different to the relationships she usually had with men. Dumas was sympathetic to women who, at that time, could barely earn a decent living without resorting to prostitution; he was sympathetic to the predicament of illegitimate children; and he was shocked by the callous treatment women often received from men. He campaigned all his life against these ills, and in this respect can be called a pioneer of women's liberation - he was the first to use the word '*feministe*' (in 1872).

But Dumas was far from supporting feminism in all its aspects. As he grew older, and society under Napoleon III became ever more permissive, he became an ever more intransigent moralist. He wished to defend the family and family life, which he himself had never had. He waged war on adultery in any form for any reason, and even maintained that a husband could and should kill an adulterous wife. All this in theory; Dumas was himself an adulterer, and had an illegitimate child. Like many moralists, he did not practice what he preached. Many of his ideas were far-fetched, but some were not, and his numerous writings on illegitimacy and the problems of unmarried mothers did much to change public opinion and thus, eventually, French legislation. Dumas's preface to the 1868 edition of *La dame aux camélias* is a passionate defence of 'fallen' women, and an attack on 'respectable' marriages for money or position, which he considered, as Tolstoy did, to be another form of prostitution.

The first performance of Dumas's play coincided with the birth of the Second Empire, an epoch to which Marie Duplessis had never belonged, and which represented everything which Dumas *fils* deplored. Under Napoleon III's despotic regime, which silenced public opinion and took all political initiative away from the French people, the nation, encouraged by the court, gave itself up to money-making and the pursuit of pleasure. It was an affluent, empty and cynical society. Paris became what it had never been before, but what is still remains in the imagination of some foreigners: the world centre for night life and sexual permissiveness. Dumas himself laid the blame for this on the newly-invented railways, which had made access to Paris easier for provincial Frenchmen and foreigners.

Marie Duplessis, with her melancholy ennui, her love of poetry, and her romantic belief in the possibility of love, would have had no place in the Second Empire; she belonged rather to the Romanticism of 1830. In 1868 Dumas himself said that his play could not have been written then. 'Not only would it no longer be true, it would no longer be possible". By then men no longer expected companionship, culture or refinement from courtesans, who had become merely expensive prostitutes, conspicuous symbols of affluence.

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Nick McCall

Cast
Karen England
Craig Downes
Martin Higgins
Róisín Toal
Sandra Oman
Amanda Pyke
Nyle Wolfe

Venues
Galway
Kilkenny
Derry
Longford
Sligo
Limerick
Cork
Waterford
Tralee

Bizet

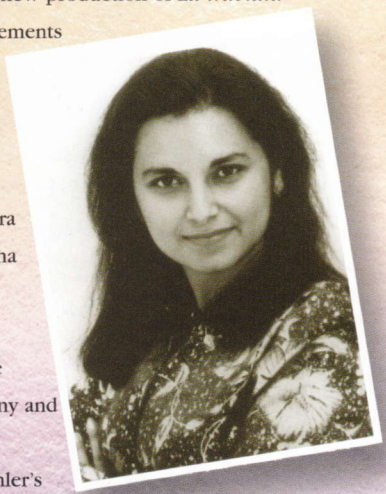
CARMEN

Tour Dates
19th May - 6th June 1999

BIOGRAPHIES

REGINA NATHAN Soprano (Ireland) Violetta Valéry

Regina Nathan has sung major lyric soprano roles throughout her career. She has sung Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera and Mimi in *La Bohème* and Euridice in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* at the Lucerne Stadttheater. In 1997 she performed her first Zdenka in Strauss's *Arabella* under Edo de Waart at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and Violetta in a new production of *La traviata* at Opéra Nantes. Recent engagements have included Antonia in Opera Ireland's *Les contes d'Hoffmann* and Gretel in Scottish Opera's *Hänsel* und *Gretel*. Her other roles for Opera Ireland include Mozart's Susanna and Puccini's Mimi.

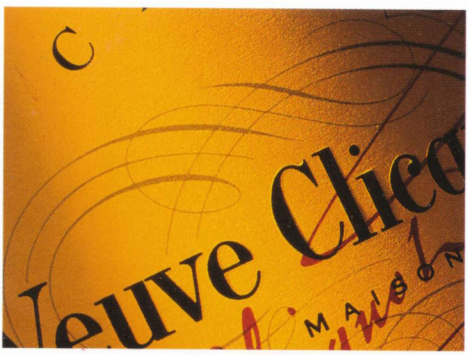


Her concert engagements have included Mahler's 4th Symphony and Mozart's *Exultate Jubilate* in Brussels; Mater Gloriosa in Mahler's 8th Symphony at the Concertegbouw and First Soprano in the same work at London's Royal Albert Hall; *Exultate Jubilate* and Beethoven's Choral Symphony with the Israel Chamber Orchestra. She performed at the opening concert of the 1998 Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur.

Regina Nathan has recorded a series of Benjamin Britten songs for Hyperion and Mahler's 8th Symphony for BMG. She has also recorded Donizetti's *Maria de Rudenz* for Opera Rara. After Opera Ireland's *La traviata* she goes to Israel to sing Adina in *L'elisir d'amore*.



OPENING BARS



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By Appointment to H.M. Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, Purveyors of Champagne, Veuve Clicquot-Ponsardin, Reims

Veuve Clicquot

CHAMPAGNE OF THE SEASON



BIOGRAPHIES

JEAN-PIERRE FURLAN Tenor (France) Alfredo Germont

Having first studied trumpet in Toulouse and Paris, and won numerous prizes, Jean-Pierre Furlan began to study singing in 1985 with Madame Christiane Patard. In 1987 he became a member of the French Army Chorus where he rapidly made a name for himself as a soloist. He made his operatic debut in the title role of Offenbach's *Les contes d'Hoffmann* at the Salle Gaveau in Paris in a production which was recorded in 1992-1993. He sang the same role for Opera Ireland in April 1998 and also for the Opera Company of Philadelphia earlier this season. This followed his North American debut as Pollione in *Norma* with the Canadian Opera Company. His repertoire also includes Verdi's Duke of Mantua, Offenbach's Paris, Thomas's Laertes (in Hamlet) and Marcello in Leoncavallo's *La Bohème*, which he sang at Wexford in 1994. In 1996 he sang Gounod's Faust at La Scala in Milan and Pinkerton at La Fenice in Venice. He has recently sung Macduff in Verdi's *Macbeth* and the title role in Berlioz's *Le damnation de Faust* in Tours. After Opera Ireland's *La traviata* he will be singing Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Malmö, Radames in *Aida* in Boston and José in *Carmen* in Liège.



GUIDO PAEVATALU Baritone (Denmark) Giorgio Germont

The Danish baritone Guido Paevatalu completed his musical education at the Opera Academy in Copenhagen in 1983 and has since been one of the main soloists at the Royal Opera. He has sung parts like Figaro in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Papageno in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, The Count in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Marcello in *La Bohème*, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* (in John Lloyd Davies's production and sets originally done for Opera Ireland in Dublin), Posa in *Don Carlos*, Ping in *Turandot*, Ford in Verdi's *Falstaff*, Wolfram in *Tannhäuser* and Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. During the present season his repertoire includes the title role in *Don Giovanni* and Belcore in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*. On the concert platform he will be a soloist in the Danish national work *Elverskud*, the contemporary *Elverspejl*, and Dr Falke in a concert performance of Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* with the Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra. On CD he can be heard in two roles on the Dacapo recording of Kunzen's *Holger Danske*.

Love and Music

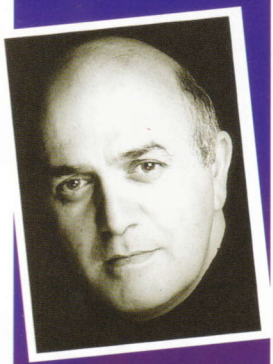
Gus Smith's best-selling history of the Dublin Grand Opera Society (1941-1998)
An enthralling story told in a lively narrative style

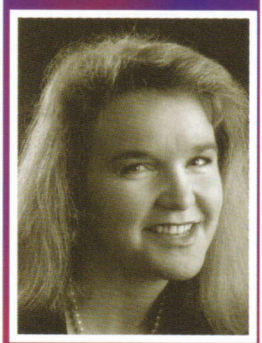
- Highlighting great operatic moments and great singers
- profiles of the society's founders and their pioneering vision
- the vital contribution made by a galaxy of Irish artists
- 32 pages of historic photos
- a complete chronology of casts and performances

ON SALE IN ALL LEADING BOOKSHOPS



Gus Smith presents a copy of Love and Music to Eileen O'Mara-Walsh, Chairman of Opera Ireland.







BIOGRAPHIES

NEVILLE ACKERMAN Tenor (UK) Gaston

Neville Ackerman studied in Cheltenham as well as with the late Tito Gobbi in Italy. He has won many awards in opera, Lieder and oratorio competitions and has sung a wide repertoire of operatic roles with Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera, and other companies in Britain, Ireland, mainland Europe and Japan. These include Pollione in *Norma*, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Enzo in *La Gioconda*, Canio in *Pagliacci*, Radames in *Aida*, Aegisthus in *Elektra* and the title role in *Les contes d'Hoffmann*. He has also sung Siegmund and Siegfried in Nuremberg Pocket Opera's one-night version of Wagner's *Ring*. For Opera Ireland he has performed Triquet in *Eugene Onegin* and Nathanaël and Spalanzani in *Hoffmann*. He recently sang Nadir in *Les pêcheurs de perles* for Opera Box Company and Cavaradossi for Welsh National Opera. His concert appearances include tenor soloist in Beethoven's Choral Symphony at the new Opera House in Cairo.

REGINA HANLEY Soprano (Ireland) Flora Bervoix

Born in Tullow, Co Carlow, Regina Hanley studied at the College of Music in Dublin and at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. In addition to a large concert repertoire, her operatic roles include Micaëla in *Carmen*, Nedda in *Pagliacci*, Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin*, Jenny's Girl in Kurt Weill's *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* and the title roles in Janácek's *Jenufa* and *Katya Kabanova*. She has appeared with Opera Ireland, English National Opera, Astrakhan (Russia), Opera Theatre Company, Opera Northern Ireland and Glyndebourne Festival. Regina Hanley's engagements in 1989/99 included Emilia Marty in Janácek's *The Makropulos Case* for Scottish Opera-Go-Round and she will perform Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* for Perth Opera Festival and a role in Elektra, to be recorded by the BBC, in addition to concerts throughout the UK.

MARTIN HIGGINS Baritone (Ireland) Baron Duphol

Born in Dublin, Martin Higgins studied there with Veronica Dunne, in Sienna with Carlo Bergonzi and at the National Opera Studio in London. He has sung leading roles with Opera Ireland, RTÉ, Castleward Opera, Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, Chelsea Opera Group and Opera Europa at Holland Park, Stowe Opera, Cottier Theatre Glasgow, Opera interludes and Scottish Opera-Go-Round. His repertoire includes Publio in *La clemenza di Tito*, Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*, Sid in *Albert Herring*, Guglielmo and Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, Marcello and Schaunard in *La Bohème*, Bernadino in *Benvenuto Cellini*, Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Figaro and Bartolo in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Robert Harley in Wilson's *A Passionate Man* and the title role in *Eugene Onegin*. Last November he sang Silvio in Opera Ireland's production of Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*.

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Limerick Belltable Arts Centre
Tuesday 4 May

Galway Town Hall Theatre
Thursday 6 May

Sligo Hawk's Well Theatre
Saturday 8 May

Mullingar Arts Centre
Monday 10 May

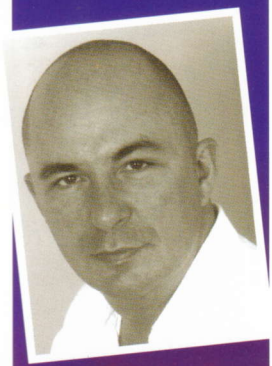
Dublin RDS Concert Hall
Thursday 13 and Friday 14 May

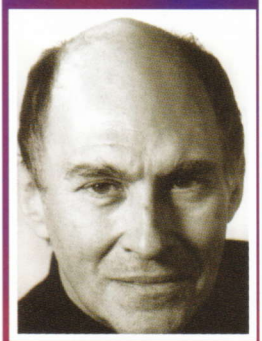
Wexford Theatre Royal
Sunday 16 May

Coleraine Riverside Theatre
Friday 21 May

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BIOGRAPHIES

GERARD O'CONNOR Bass (Ireland) Dottore Grenvil

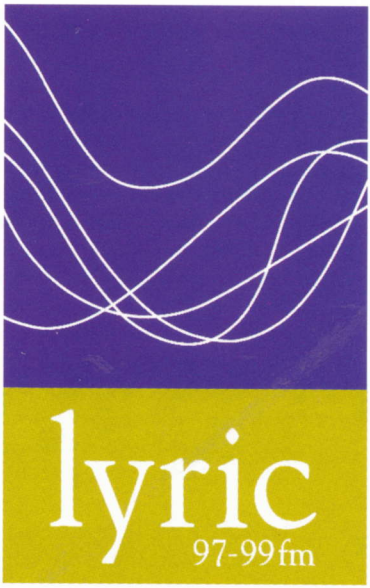
Gerard O'Connor was the first recipient of the Guinness Bursary at the National Opera Studio in London and thereafter he has sung with Singapore Lyric Opera, Opera Ireland, Opera Northern Ireland, Castleward Opera, Chelsea Opera, Holland Park opera and at the Covent Garden and Wexford Festivals in repertoire including *Iris*, Gianni Schicchi, Curlew River, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Cunning Little Vixen, Rigoletto and Paisiello's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. For Opera Ireland he has sung Colline (*La Bohème*), Pistol (*Falstaff*), Baron Zeta (*Merry Widow*), Antonio (*Figaro*), Frank (*Fledermaus*) and the Bonze (*Madama Butterfly*). He created the role of St John in the world premiere of James Wilson's *A Passionate Man* in Dublin and Mamïov in the European premiere of Tchaikovsky's *The Enchantress*. Engagements in 1999 include the Bonze at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, three roles in *Hoffmann* for Central Festival Opera and Rossini's Don Basilio at Castleward.

MALCOLM RIVERS Bass-baritone (UK) Marchese d'Obigny

Malcolm Rivers was trained at the Royal College of Music in London and coached in the United States by George London. His international career as a principal baritone has taken him to major theatres such as Covent Garden, Teatro San Carlo in Naples, Teatro Comunale in Florence, La Fenice in Venice, Netherlands Opera, The Vienna State Opera, Seattle Opera and Heuston Grand Opera as well as to the Festivals in Drottningholm, Brussels, Aldeburgh and Edinburgh. More recently he has appeared at English National Opera as Scarpia in *Tosca*, Eisenhardt in Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten* and the Commandant in Janácek's *From the House of the Dead*. He has also sung the Spirit Messenger in Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in Marseille, Wagner's Alberich at Arizona Opera and the Judge in Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* for Opera North. Later this season he will return to Marseille as Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*.

MICHELE SHERIDAN Soprano (Ireland) Annina

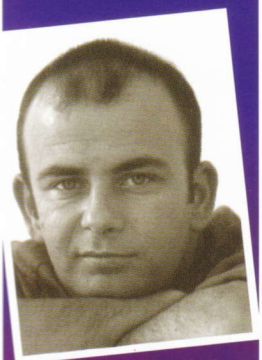
Michele Sheridan is in her final year of the B.Mus Performance course at the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama where her teacher is Mary Brennan. At last year's Siemens-Nixdorf Feis Ceoil she won nine vocal competitions, including the Margaret Burke-Sheridan and Gervase Elwes Cups; and in November she was awarded the Ford/*Sunday Independent* Spirit of Life Bursary for Most Promising Young Artist. She was also a semi-finalist in the 1999 Veronica Dunne International Singing Competition. Michele was the soprano soloist in Mozart's *Requiem* with the University of Dublin Choral Society in March and she has also given a recital for the John McCormack Society of Ireland in Dublin's Mansion House and appeared in the NCH's John Field Room, the Bank of Ireland Arts Centre and at the Boyle Arts Festival. She has performed on FM3 Classical Radio and RTÉ Television's *Late Late Show*.

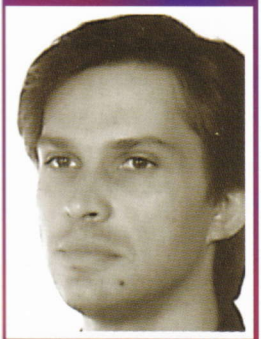


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BIOGRAPHIES

JEROME PILLEMENT (France) Conductor

Jérôme Pillement studied with J S Bereau and Pierre Dervaux at the Paris Conservatoire, where he was awarded a gold medal and became a Laureate of the Menuhin Foundation. In 1987 he took part in Leonard Bernstein's conducting course and conducted orchestras in the USA and Canada. He then conducted several concerts at festivals in Tunis and Beziers as well as at the Abbaye de Fontenay, with Pierre Amoyal as soloist. Jérôme Pillement started his opera career by conducting Offenbach's *La Périchole* in Nantes. At the same time he conducted concerts with the Pays de la Loire Orchestra, to which he still returns every year. He was appointed permanent guest conductor of the Montpellier Philharmonic Orchestra and of the Montpellier Opéra in January 1994. This season he will conduct performances of Offenbach's *Les Brigands* in Théâtre de Caen as well as a tour of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* in France. He has conducted Fauré's *Requiem* at La Fenice in Venice, and he has also conducted in Marseille, Rouen, Strasbourg, Bordeau, Tenerife, Compiègne and New Orleans . On CD he has recorded the ballet *La fille mal gardée* for and Bizet's *La jolie fille du Perth* this year.

STEPHAN GRÖGLER (Switzerland) Director

Born in Berne, Stephan Grögler studied opera direction at the University of Vienna and spent some years at major theatres around Europe assisting such directors as Halman, Soleri, Cox, Yoshida, Françon, Grüber, Teshigahara, Carsen, Kokkos, Lavelli and others. He has designed sets for his own productions of Horvath's *Figaro lasst sich scheiden* in Switzerland; Maxwell Davies' *Eight Songs for a Mad King* and *Miss Donnithorn's Maggot* in Vienna (1992) and Lyon (1995); A Stravinsky-Milhaud Revue in Salzburg (1993); Sutermeister's *Die schwarze Spinne* and Blacher's *Die Flut* in Vienna (1994). He has also designed Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* at Théâtre de Caen (revived in Rennes, Rouen, Paris Opéra-Comique and Lyon). In 1995 he was appointed Resident Director of Opéra National de Lyon where he has directed *Hänsel und Gretel*, Zimmermann's *Die weisse Rose* and works by Menotti, Hindemith and Wolf-Ferrari. Stephan Grögler has also directed *La Bohème* in Biel and Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* and the world premiere of Finzi's *La mort de Socrate* at the Opéra-Comique. At Caen he has directed Britten's *Rape of Lucretia* and *Beggar's Opera*. Future projects include Weill's *Johnny Johnson* in Caen and Haydn's *Orfeo ed Euridice* in Lausanne.

VERONIQUE SEYMAT (France) Designer

Born in Lyon in 1963, Véronique Seymat studied scenic and costume design at l'Ecole Supérieure des Arts Appliqués there. She has worked with director Stephan Grögler since 1993. Their first collaboration was on Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* in Caen, a production later brought to the Opéra-Comique in Paris and the Opéra de Lyon. In 1995 she designed the costumes for *Hänsel und Gretel* for Opéra Lyon and in 1997 she designed the sets and costumes for Grögler's production of Puccini's *La Bohème* at the Opéra in Biel. Again with Grögler, she designed Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* for Caen; Viktor Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* and Gracianne Finzi's *La mort de Socrate* at the Opéra -Comique; Udo Zimmermann's *Die weisse Rose* and three short operas as well as the world premiere of Marcel Landowski's Gallina in Lyon. She is currently preparing designs for a production of plays by Ionesco for Lyon and Haydn's opera *Orfeo ed Euridice* for Opéra de Lausanne.

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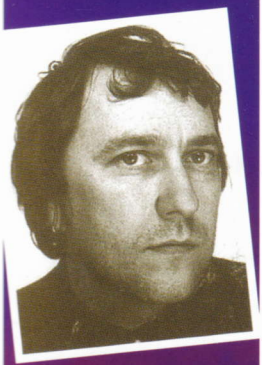
with Nancy Yuen in the title role

Lyric Opera Orchestra and Chorus

Saturday, 2nd October 1999

NATIONAL CONCERT HALL, DUBLIN

BIOGRAPHIES



NICK MCCALL (UK) Lighting Designer

From Glasgow, now living in Dublin, Nick McCall has worked as a lighting designer in Ireland, the UK, mainland Europe and North America on theatre, opera, dance and concert productions. He was lighting designer for Opera Ireland's *Falstaff* and *Tales of Hoffmann* last year. At the Gaiety Theatre he has lit *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *The Field*, *Mother Goose*, *Cinderella* and *The Salvage Shop*. His work at the Abbey Theatre includes *Good Evening Mr Collins*, *The Crucible* and *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. He has also lit shows for Rough Magic, the Samuel Beckett Centre, Imdt, Prime Cut, Belfast's Charabanc Theatre Company, and others. Nick McCall recently received the *Irish Times*/ESB Lighting Designer of the Year Award (jointly with Ciara McCarthy). His hobbies include holistic medicine, paragliding and weaving. He has no convictions and no longer attends therapy. He has an imaginary friend called Felicity.



MAIRÉAD HURLEY (Ireland) Répétiteur

Mairéad Hurley studied under Rhona Marshall at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin as well as at UCD and at the National Opera Studio in London. Currently working as répétiteur at the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, she has performed extensively throughout Ireland and the UK as recitalist, accompanist and répétiteur. For Opera Ireland, Mairéad has been répétiteur for *La Bohème*, *Macbeth*, *The Gypsy Baron*, *The Merry Widow*, *Les contes d'Hoffmann* and *Die Fledermaus*. She has also worked with Opera Touring Company, Opera Northern Ireland and the RTÉ Proms. Three years ago she toured Northern Ireland with ONI's *The World of Opera* and she has since worked on that company's *Madama Butterfly*, *Idomeneo* and *Hansel and Gretel*.



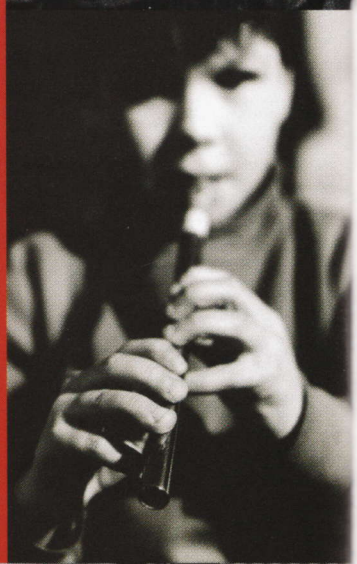
BENEDICTE DEBILLY (France) Assistant Director

Bénédicte Debilly was trained as an actress at the National Theatre in Marseille. She has taken part in theatrical productions of pieces by Federico Garcia Lorca, Bertold Brecht, Cie Blaguebolle amongst others. Since 1995 she has been working with Stephan Grögler as his assistant. Her work with him includes productions of Humperdink's *Hänsel und Gretel*, Udo Zimmermann's *Die weisse Rose*, Menotti's *The Telephone*, Hindemith's *Aller retour* and Wolf-Ferrari *Il segretto di Susanna* at Opéra de Lyon; Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, Graciane Finzi's *Le dernier jour de Socrates* and Viktor Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* at the Paris Opéra-Comique: Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* and the same composer's realisation of *The Beggar's Opera* at Théâtre de Caen.

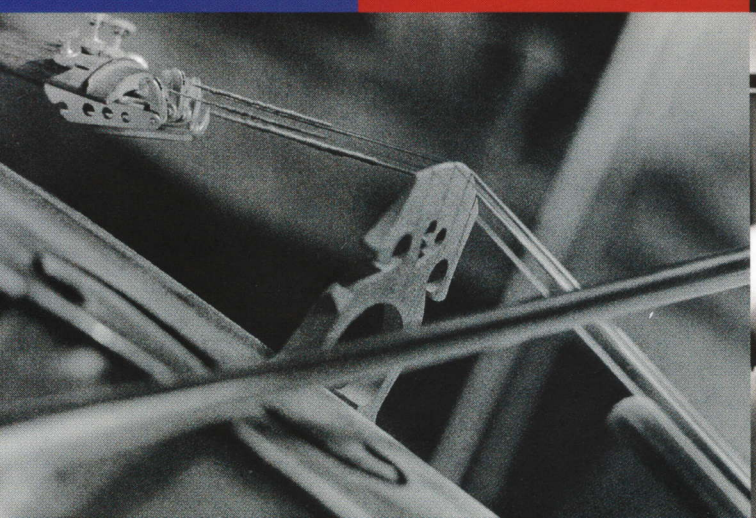


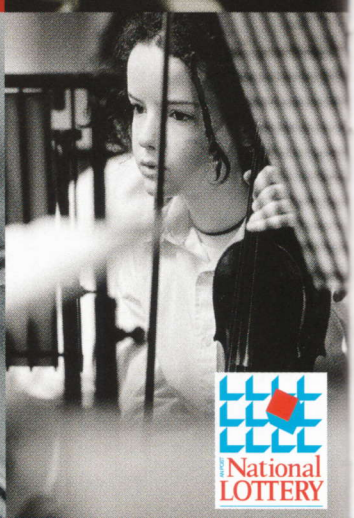
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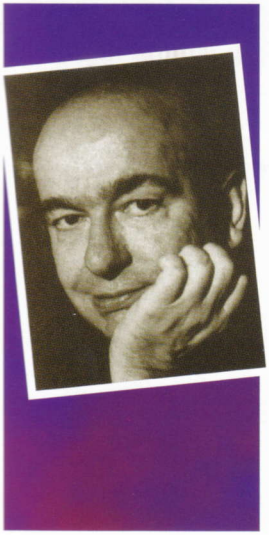


If you're one of the many who lent a hand by playing along, thank you.





The National LOTTERY



BIOGRAPHIES

CHRISTOPHER MCMANUS (UK) Chorus Master

Christopher McManus was an Organ Scholar at Sussex University before he began his career as répétiteur and assistant chorus master with Scottish Opera and pianist with Opera for All. He worked for six years at Oper am Rhein where he conducted operas by Donizetti, Rossini, Mozart, Humperdink and Puccini as well as many performances of *My Fair Lady* and several ballet evenings. In 1976 he was at Bayreuth working with Horst Stein on *Parsifal* as well as on Chereaux's Centenary *Ring* cycle. He conducted further operas and ballets during his three-year stint as head of Music Staff in Krefeld. At the Royal Opera, which he joined in 1981, he has conducted *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and an Alfredo Kraus celebrity concert at the Barbican as well as accompanying Angela Gheorghiu and José Cura. He was also Acting Chorus Master for Dohnanyi's Wozzeck and assisted Terry Edwards on many other pieces. Christopher McManus appears regularly in Ireland as an accompanist for operatic concerts at the NCH and around the country

OPERA IRELAND CHORUS

GUISEPPE VERDI

LA TRAVIATA

SOPRANOS

Sinéad Campbell, Rosemary Collier, Aoife Dunne, Roz McCrane, Niamh O'Brien, Sylvia O'Brien, Sandra Oman, Mary O'Sullivan, Michele Sheridan, Roisín Toal.

MEZZO-SOPRANOS

Dervilla Conlon, Anne Marie Gibbons, Sandra Gudgeon, Nicola Hendy, Maggie Killian, Petrina McAleer, Cora Newman, Dearbhla Walsh.

TENORS

Tom Cregan, Dermott Doyle, Frank Dunne, Tom Kinirons, John McKeown, Andrew Nangle, Joe Roche

BASSES

Des Capliss, Jeffery Ledwidge, Michael Lee, Seamus Ludden, Lorcan O'Byrne, Conor O'Reilly,

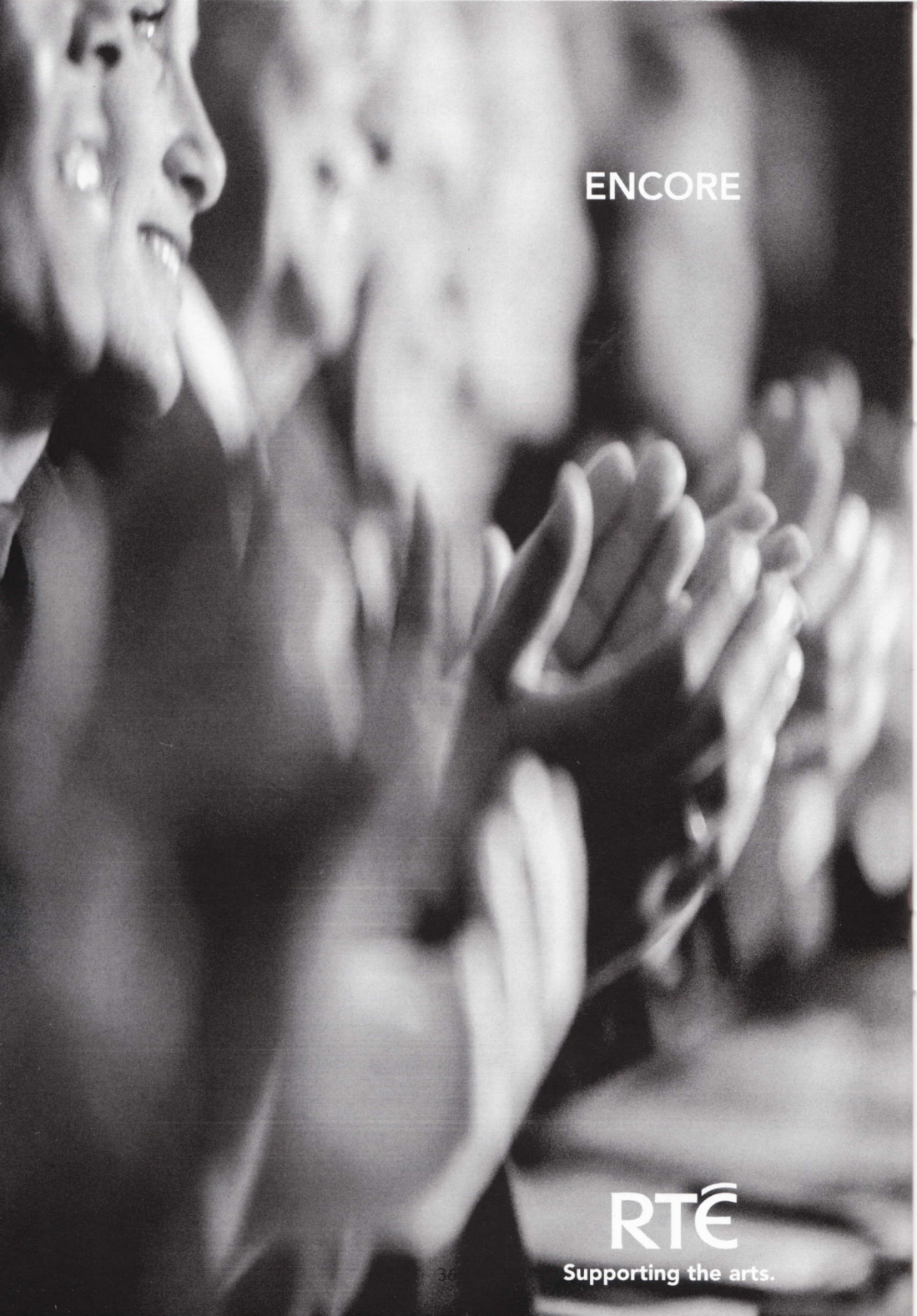
The core membership of the Opera Ireland Chorus comes from the National Chamber Choir

OPERA IRELAND

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www.opera-ireland.ie

Opera Ireland's e-mail address is: info@opera-ireland.ie


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RTE CONCERT ORCHESTRA

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR: Proinnsías Ó Duinn

1st Violins
Michael d'Arcy (Leader)
Michael Healy (Co-Leader)
Mircea Petcu
Pamela Forde
Sunniva Fitzpatrick
Eileen Murphy
Ruth Murphy
Sebastien Petiet

2nd Violins
Elizabeth Leonard
Paul O'Hanlon
Jennifer Cassidy
Carol Quigley
Arthur McIver
Donal Roche

Violas
Thomas Kane
Ruth Mann
Michelle Lalor
Jenny Turner

Cellos
David James
Annette Cleary
Catherine Behan
Hilary O'Donovan

Double Basses
Seamus Doyle
Daniel Whibley

Flutes
Elizabeth Petcu
Deirdre Brady

Piccolo
Deirdre Brady

Oboes
David Agnew
Síle Daly

Clarinets
Michael Seaver
Jean Duncan

Bassoons
John Leonard
Carole Block

Horns
David Carmody
Declan McCarthy
Fearghal Ó Ceallachain
Mary Curran

Trumpets
Eoin Daly
David Martin

Trombones
David Weakley
John Tate

Bass Trombone
Patrick Kennedy

Tuba
James Kavanagh

Timpani
John Fennessy

Percussion
Messimo Marraccini
Tony Kavanagh

ADMINISTRATION

Director of Music
Niall Doyle

Orchestra Manager
Sam Ellis

Planning Co-ordinator
Niamh Killeen

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Salvatore Allegra
Ave Maria 1959
Il medico suo malgrado 1962

Michael W Balfe
The Bohemian Girl 1943

Ludwig van Beethoven
Fidelio 1954, 1994

Vincenzo Bellini
La sonnambula 1960, 1963
Norma 1955, 1989
I puritani 1975

Benjamin Britten
Peter Grimes 1990

Georges Bizet
Carmen 1941, 1989
Les pêcheurs de perles 1964, 1987

Gustave Charpentier
Louise 1979

Francesco Cilea
Adriana Lecouvreur 1967, 1980

Domenico Cimarosa
Il matrimonio segreto 1961

Claude Debussy
Pelléas et Mélisande 1948

Léo Delibes
Lakmé 1993

Gaetano Donizetti
Don Pasquale 1952, 1987
L'elisir d'amore 1958, 1996
La favorita 1942, 1982
La figlia del reggimento 1978
Lucia di Lammermoor 1955, 1991

Friedrich von Flotow
Martha 1982, 1992

Umberto Giordano
Andrea Chénier 1957, 1983
Fedora 1959

Christoph W Gluck
Orfeo ed Euridice 1960, 1986

Charles Gounod
Faust 1941, 1995
Roméo et Juliette 1945

George F Handel
Messiah 1942

Engelbert Humperdinck
Hänsel und Gretel 1943, 1994

Leoš Janáček
Jenufa 1973

Franz Lehár
The Merry Widow 1997

Ruggiero Leoncavallo
Pagliacci 1941, 1998

Pietro Mascagni
L'amico Fritz 1952
Cavalleria rusticana 1941, 1998

Jules Massenet
Manon 1952, 1980
Werther 1967, 1977

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Così fan tutte 1950, 1993
Don Giovanni 1943, 1995
Idomeneo 1956
Die Entführung aus dem Serail 1949, 1964
Le nozze di Figaro 1942, 1997
Die Zauberflöte 1990, 1996

Jacques Offenbach
Les contes d'Hoffmann 1945, 1998

Amilcare Ponchielli
La Gioconda 1944, 1984

Giacomo Puccini
La Bohème 1941, 1996
Gianni Schicchi 1962
Madama Butterfly 1942, 1993
Manon Lescaut 1958, 1991
Suor Angelica 1962
Tosca 1941, 1996
Turandot 1957, 1986

Licinio Refice
Cecilia 1954

Gioacehino Rossini
Il barbiere di Siviglia 1942, 1991
La Cenerentola 1972, 1995
L'italiana in Algeri 1978, 1992

Camille Saint-Saëns
Samson et Dalila 1942, 1979

Bedřich Smetana
The Bartered Bride 1953, 1976

Johann Strauss
Die Fledermaus 1962, 1998
Der Zigeunerbaron 1964

Richard Strauss
Der Rosenkavalier 1964, 1984
Salome 1999

Ambroise Thomas
Mignon 1966, 1973

Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky
Eugene Onegin 1969, 1997
The Queen of Spades 1972

Giuseppe Verdi
Aida 1942, 1984
Un ballo in maschera 1949, 1992
Don Carlos 1950, 1985
Ernani 1965, 1978
Falstaff 1960, 1998
La forza del destino 1951, 1973
Macbeth 1963, 1997
Nabucco 1962, 1986
Otello 1946, 1981
Rigoletto 1941, 1994
Simon Boccanegra 1956, 1974
La traviata 1941, 1999
Il trovatore 1941, 1995

Gerard Victory
Music Hath Mischief 1968

Richard Wagner
Der fliegende Holländer 1946, 1964
Lohengrin 1971, 1983
Tannhäuser 1943, 1977
Tristan und Isolde 1953, 1963
Die Walküre 1956

Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari
Il segreto di Susanna 1956



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BOOKING INFORMATION: The Box Office is open Monday-Saturday 10 am-7 pm for advance bookings. Telephone (01) 677 1717. Postal bookings to: The Gaiety Theatre, South King Street, Dublin 2.
CREDIT CARD BOOKINGS: All major credit cards are accepted subject to a booking fee of 70p and 30p for all bookings posted out.
GROUP DISCOUNTS: For details please call Alan McQuillan on (01) 679 5622.

GIFT VOUCHERS: May be purchased at the Box Office.

LATECOMERS: In response to general request, latecomers will not be admitted until a suitable break in the performance.

FIRE PROCEDURE: In the event of an emergence, please follow the instructions of the staff, who are trained in evacuation procedure, and walk quickly through the nearest fire exit, which is marked.

GENERAL INFORMATION: Smoking is prohibited in the auditorium. Glasses and bottles may not be brought into the auditorium. The use of cameras and recorders of any kind is prohibited.

KIOSK: The Gaiety Kiosk is situated in the foyer and is open before the performance and during the interval. The kiosk stocks minerals and confectionery.

ICES: Ices are sold on each level of the auditorium during the interval. For the benefit of party organisers, orders may be placed in advance.

BARS: Bars are situated on the Parterre, Dress Circle and Grand Circle levels. All bars are open an hour before the performance and during the interval. To avoid queuing for your interval drinks, you may pre-order your drinks and reserve a table in any of the bars.

At the end of the performance, John B's Bar on the Parterre level will remain open. The gaiety bars offer an attractive setting for Conferences, Press Receptions, Fashion Shows and Meetings The Management reserves the right to refuse admission and to make any alteration in the cast or programme which may be rendered necessary by illness or other unavoidable cause.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AT THE GAIETY THEATRE

If you are interested in the Gaiety's coming season, please fill in the form below and give it to the usher on duty or send it too:

THE GAIETY THEATRE, SOUTH KING STREET, DUBLIN 2.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

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